

## ***Breaking News***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Board extends funds for County Air Rescue Program**

SAN BERNARDINO-The Board of Supervisors approved an allocation to County Fire to fund the San Bernardino County Joint Sheriff/Fire Air Rescue Program.

The Air Rescue Program is a joint collaborative program between San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and San Bernardino County Fire Department; capable of operations 24 hours a day with innovative rescue tactics.

The Sheriff's Department provides an established infrastructure, fleet, and personnel while County Fire provides licensed healthcare providers certified at the paramedic level. These benefits coupled with the technical rescue capabilities of both agencies make this a highly efficient and successful program.

San Bernardino County extends over 20,000 square miles with First and Third Districts of the County having the most geographically diverse terrains in the desert and mountain communities. Chairman James Ramos and Vice-Chairman Robert Lovingood pushed for the allocation of funds to be included in the First Quarter Budget.

"Our County has a great team of well-trained first responders capable of responding to any emergency need that our residents might face," stated Vice-Chairman Robert Lovingood. "Chairman Ramos and I represent areas of very rural terrain so it was very important for us to push for an increase in fund allocation."

The Air Rescue Program offers quick response time to any emergency need. Each year, the program responds to approximately 250 calls for service. These calls range from technical hoist rescues, swift water rescues, injured skiers/boarders/hikers, and major accident trauma victims.

Currently, County Fire is using the Sheriff's Department's refurbished helicopters for 10 hours each day Monday through Thursday to respond to emergency medical calls. The approval of fund allocation will extend air rescue program services from 4 days a week to 7 days a week, on a pilot basis.

**County Air Rescue**  
**Nov. 17, 2015**  
**Page 2**

Chairman Ramos commented, "Now is the time to focus on the needs of our County residents. We do not know when or where an emergency need will occur but what we can control is our ability to be prepared. This multi-mission rescue program is a great advantage for our County and its residents in its ability to rapidly respond and secure a scene in any emergency. I am proud to see the Board of Supervisors continuing to work together to serve the needs of our County residents."

More information regarding this item can be found in the Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> agenda at <http://cob-sire.sbcounty.gov/sirepub/>.

\*Photo will be provided.

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